

Grade 6 Overview

Focus: I Can Make A Difference

I can make a difference . . .

- *in my school.*
- *in my community.*
- *in my state.*
- *in my nation.*

This unit helps students to develop the skills and understanding necessary for good citizenship through service-learning projects and practice in resolving conflicts.

Key Ideas:

A community:

- is supported by and supports its members and others in the community.
- is made up of neighborhoods and groups that form the larger community.
- combines with other communities to form the state and the nation.
- is no stronger than its weakest members.

Key Connections to Citizenship Education:

Good citizens:

- take personal responsibility for obligations to family and community.
- always do their personal best.
- treat others the way they would want to be treated.
- respect their parents and home.
- possess skills necessary to live peaceably in society and not resorting to violence to settle disputes.

Lessons:

1. *“I’ll do it if you pay me.” (Helping Others Is its Own Reward.)*
2. *“What’s in it for me?” (Doing My Part Makes Me Part of the Community.)*
3. *Resolving conflicts peacefully.*

Culminating Activity:

Select a service project as suggested in Lessons One and Two. Keep a photographic log and class journal of the process of selecting and carrying out the project. (Presentation software, such as Power Point™, could also be effective.) Celebrate at the conclusion of the project with the recognition of leaders, parents, and resource persons. Generate publicity for this celebration, so that participants from the community may be included.

Have students complete a self-evaluation at the conclusion of the project. Students might respond to questions, such as the following:

- “In what ways have I demonstrated my ability to accept responsibility?”
- “New insights I have gained in regard to being a good citizen are”
- “Ways of resolving disagreements or handling conflicts which were most effective for me were”
- “Positive ways I have tried to do things differently at home or school are”

Curriculum Connections:

Activities in this unit will help students to attain academic standards in:

Social Studies (Grade 6)

Civic Ideals and Practice - Students will:

Develop a commitment to effective and responsible participation in the functioning of school and community organizations.

- participate in a service-learning project at some point during the school year.
- accept responsibility for individual actions in the school and community.
- work cooperatively toward goals.
- provide positive leadership for at least one classroom activity or organization in the school and/or community.

Language Arts (Grades 6-8) - Students will:

Write for different purposes and audiences producing a variety of forms, including.

- messages and letters.
- logs of ideas and information.
- lists and charts.
- rhymes and poems.

Grade 6 Lesson One

“I’ll Do It If You Pay Me.” (Helping Others Is Its Own Reward.)

This lesson involves students in researching service organizations in the community and selecting one or more to assist as a class or group project. (Instead of a classroom activity, this project might be carried out by a school service club.)

Key Ideas:

- Volunteerism is essential to maintain important community organizations.
- Taking responsibility for community activities helps students both learn and gain a sense of being part of the community.

Key Connections to Citizenship Education:

Good citizens:

- always do their personal best.
- take personal responsibility for obligations to family and community.
- treat others the way they would want to be treated.
- respect their parents and home.
- respect themselves.

Objectives:

Students will:

- define “volunteerism.”
- compare the qualities of a volunteer with those of a good citizen.
- explore activities that help them to become aware that being of service to others is a rewarding experience.

Introductory Activity:

Ask students if they know people in the school and community who are “volunteers.” Examples might include parents who volunteer to help with school activities, Scout leaders, and others. Ask students what these people have in common. Help students to understand that many people have jobs that involve helping other people. Many people also volunteer their time to help others without pay. This is called “volunteerism.” Ask students if any of them have served as volunteers. What did they learn from the experience? Let them know that the students can practice good citizenship skills as volunteers.

Core Activities:

1. Review the qualities of a good citizen from IC 20-10.1-4-4.5. Ask students to compare the qualities of a good citizen with those of a volunteer. Develop a diagram or a chart comparing the two concepts. (See the next page.)
2. Help the class research and select a non profit organization to which they want to donate a few hours of service or to complete a specific task to help the organization.
3. The teacher should contact the community service organization that students have selected to ask what the class can do to help.
4. After completing the project, students will write about their volunteer activities addressing the following questions: What was the service experience like? What happened as a result? Was this a rewarding experience? Please explain.

Additional Ideas:

Individual students may decide to continue this community service relationship, helping the service organization at other times during the school year.

Evaluation/Assessment:

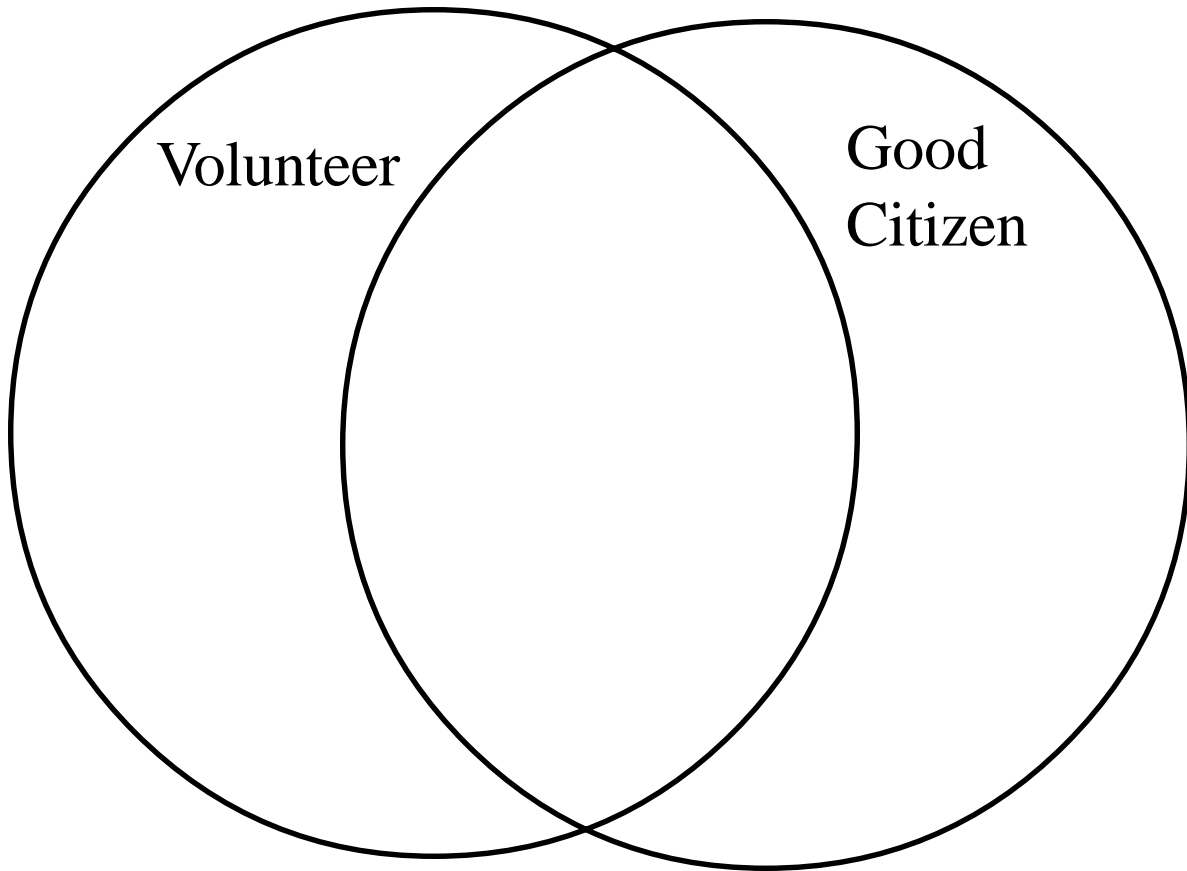
Assessment should be based on student participation in the project and student writing about the experience. In evaluating participation, the following points might be considered: evidence that student is making his or her best effort; cooperative attitude; courteous behavior; demonstration of respect for others; and growth in respect for his or her own abilities and contributions.

Home Connection:

Parents should be kept informed of the purposes and activities involved in this project. In researching community service organizations locally, students might ask their parents to talk with them about organizations they may be aware of that provide services to the community.

Resources:

- IC 20-10.1-4-4.5 (See the Resources section of the guide.)
- Invite a representative from a local volunteer organization to share information.
- Diagram (below)





Grade 6 Lesson Two

“What’s In It For Me?” (Doing My Part Makes Me Part of the Community.)

This lesson engages students in planning and carrying out a project to benefit a community organization or a school project.

Key Idea:

- Contributing to one’s community enhances one’s sense of belonging.

Key Connections to Citizenship Education:

Good citizens:

- always do their personal best.
- take personal responsibility for obligations to family and community.
- treat others the way they would want to be treated.
- respect themselves.
- respect their parents and home.

Objectives:

Students will:

- consider practical ways that individuals can take responsibility for community concerns.
- use money earned from a service project to help a needy cause chosen by students.
- understand that service-learning and giving to others can be a rewarding experience.

Introductory Activity:

Offer students the opportunity to identify concerns that exist in the school or community. Help them identify one concern that they can address at school. Students may identify recycling, school clean-up, or some other concern. A recycling project has the advantage of producing some income, which can be dedicated to a worthy cause or project.

Core Activities:

1. Students should summarize the concern they have identified in a brief, written statement.
2. Students then list steps that need to be taken to address the concern and formulate an action plan with a timeline.
3. Tasks can be identified, and groups of students can take responsibility for completing tasks and meeting the timeline.

Example - Recycling Program:

- Students can make containers for each classroom for paper recyclables and for aluminum cans.
- Students take responsibility for collection of recyclables and preparation for pick-up at designated day or time.
- Money from the recycling project can benefit a community organization or a school project that the students can select. Using an open process, ask the class, prior to the project kick-off, to select the organization that will get the donation. Support for this organization then can be featured in any publicity designed to build participation in the recycling project.

Additional Ideas:

Use newspapers and magazines to find articles about students who have made a difference in their community.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will be evaluated based on the final products and on the performance of the team effort. Evaluation criteria can be developed by the class in order to judge success of the overall project. This evaluation should include an assessment of the problem statement, action plan, and the ability to develop a realistic timeline.

Home Connection:

Parents should be informed of the purposes and activities involved in this lesson. Students might want to be responsible for recycling or another project at home. Recyclables can be donated to a recycling project at school. Parents may want to participate in the activity with the students by working together or by going to the donation site. Recognition of parents' efforts should be a part of the project.

Community Connection:

Community businesses might be found to be partners in helping with the recycling project. Community partners should be recognized at the end of the project for their part in helping with the project.

Resources:

- Contact several recycling centers in the community. Find out which pay for recyclable goods.





Grade 6 Lesson Three

Resolving Conflicts Peacefully

This lesson helps students to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

Key Idea:

- Conflict can be handled positively in resolving differences.

Key Connections to Citizenship Education:

- Good citizens possess the skills necessary to live peaceably in society and not resort to violence to settle disputes.

Objectives:

Students will

- identify better means to manage conflicts.
- discuss methods in which they can exercise self-discipline.

Introductory Activity:

Display the following quote by Mahatma Ghandi: “If you want real peace, you shall start with the children.” Ask students what they think the quote means and what relevance it has to today’s world.

Core Activities:

1. Ask students, working in small groups or pairs, to discuss why they fight and how they resolve their fights.
2. Ask students to think about a solution to a conflict or problem they have recently encountered. In small groups, have students suggest ways to resolve conflicts without fighting.
3. Have a class “Tug-Of-War.” What is an alternative to a tug-of-war? Discuss win/win, win/lose, and lose/lose situations. Use teacher generated situations to start the discussion.
4. Discuss the quote, “Peace begins with me.” Have students write a brief interpretation of this quote.

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5. Help students develop and practice a set of skills for avoiding aggressive behavior, such as: using polite language; not using “fighting words” or words that hurt others; learning to disagree respectfully; and expressing feelings in constructive ways.
 6. Have students write a poem about peace, friendship, or respect or submit their own artwork about the theme. Display their work and then compile it into a spiral-bound booklet for display in the classroom or school library.

Additional Ideas:

Give students an opportunity to correspond with other schools in the United States and in other countries on the topic of peacefully resolving conflicts. Request that their pen pals or e-mail pals send artwork and poetry that could be included in a class book or scanned into a multimedia presentation.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Finished products, such as the booklet, can be evaluated by criteria that have been developed by the teacher and students. Student participation can be used as a means for assessing depth of understanding and involvement. For example: Do students use “win/win” strategies and conflict management skills in everyday classroom and school situations? Teacher observations should be shared on a regular basis with students.

Home Connection:

Keep parents informed of the intent and activities in this lesson. Some students might select a newspaper article that describes a conflict and discuss with a parent how the conflict could be handled.

Resources:

See the *Resources* section for programs and materials related to conflict reduction.